

# Healthy Outcomes

Dry Eye Awareness Month

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Central PA  
Health Care Quality Unit  
Monthly Newsletter  
July 2024

[WEBSITE](#)



## **Sjogren's Syndrome Overview**

By Mayo Clinic

Sjögren's ("SHOW-grins") is a systemic autoimmune disease that affects the entire body.

Along with symptoms of extensive dryness, other serious complications include profound fatigue, chronic pain, major organ involvement, neuropathies, and lymphomas.

Sjogren's (SHOW-grins) syndrome is a disorder of your immune system identified by its two most common symptoms – dry eyes and a dry mouth.

The condition often accompanies other immune system disorders, such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus. In Sjogren's syndrome, the mucous membranes and moisture-secreting

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## **WHAT'S NEW**

Sjogren's Syndrome Overview

-Causes of Dry Eyes

-Sparklers are Dangerous

-Move Your Way

-HCQU Support and Services

-IDD Toolkit Website

-Hot German Potato Salad Recipe

-ODP Health Alert-Lyme and Tickborne Diseases

glands of your eyes and mouth are usually affected first – resulting in decreased tears and saliva.

Although you can develop Sjogren's syndrome at any age, most people are older than forty at the time of diagnosis. The condition is much more common in women. Treatment focuses on relieving symptoms.

## Symptoms

The two main symptoms of Sjogren's syndrome are:

- **Dry eyes.** Your eyes might burn, itch, or feel gritty – as if there's sand in them.
- **Dry mouth.** Your mouth might feel like it is full of cotton, making it difficult to swallow or speak.

Some people with Sjogren's syndrome also have one or more of the following:

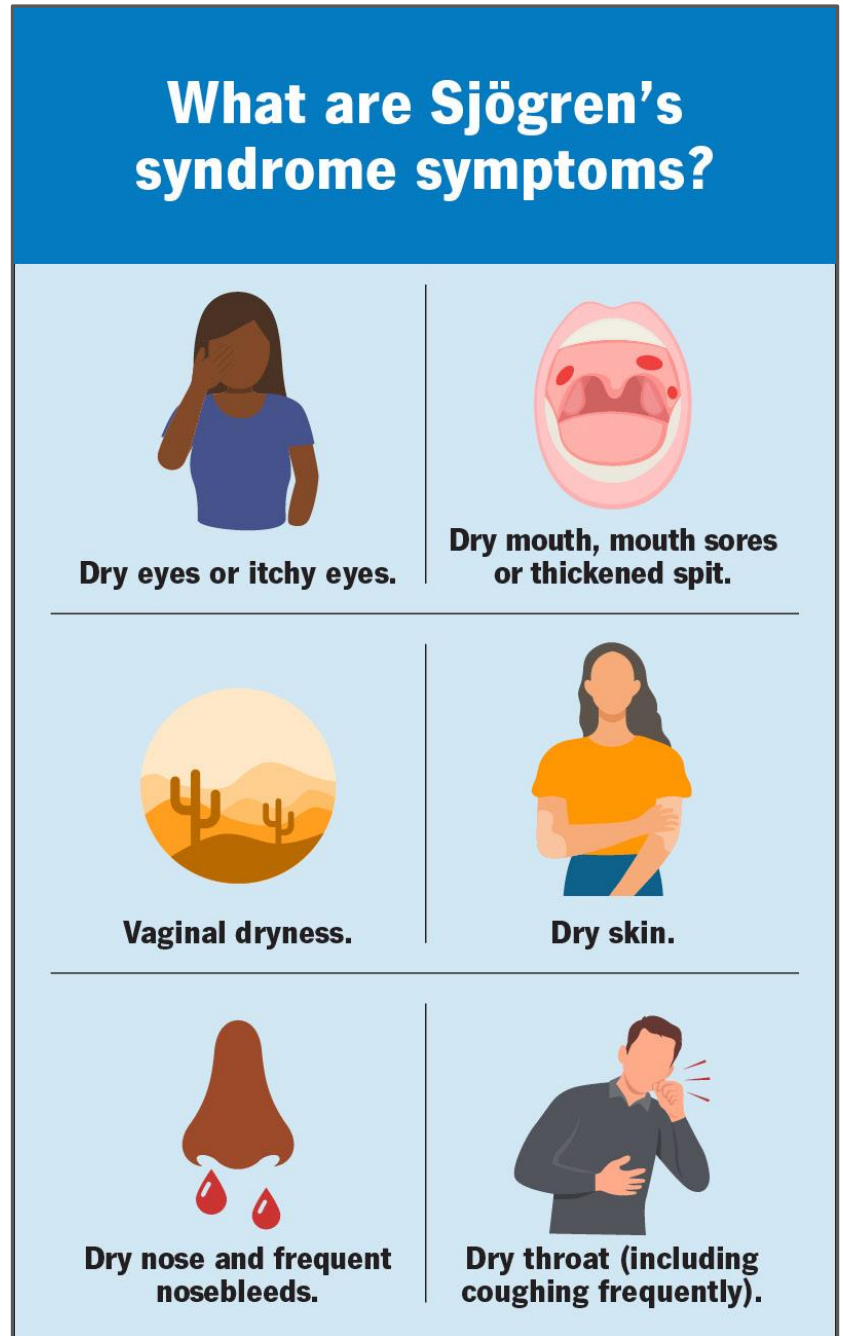
- Joint pain, swelling and stiffness
- Swollen salivary glands – particularly the set located behind your jaw and in front of your ears
- Skin rashes or dry skin
- Vaginal dryness
- Persistent dry cough
- Prolonged fatigue

## Causes

Sjogren's syndrome is an autoimmune disorder. Your immune system mistakenly attacks your body's own cells and tissues.

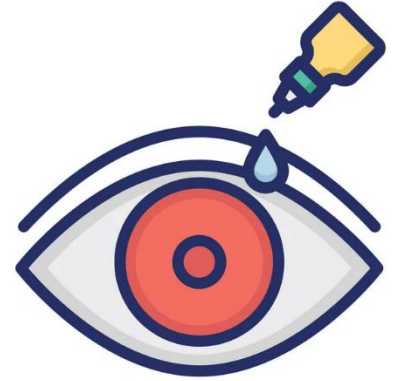
Scientists are not certain why some people develop Sjogren's syndrome. Certain genes put people at higher risk of the disorder, but it appears that a triggering mechanism – such as infection with a particular virus or strain of bacteria – is also necessary.

Read about [risk factors, complications](#) , [diagnosis and treatment](#).



# Causes of Dry Eyes

There are many potential origins of dry eyes. Here are a few of the most common causes.



- **Aging** – Dry eye can occur at any age, but it becomes more common as you age, especially after age 50.
- **Computer use** – Working at a computer or a digital device, we tend to blink our eyes less thoroughly and less frequently. Excessive computer use leads to greater tear evaporation and an increased risk of dry eye symptoms.
- **Menopause** – Post-menopausal women are at risk of dry eyes more than men of the same age.
- **Wearing a mask** – A mask to protect against the spread of a virus may cause dry eye by forcing air out the top of the mask and over the eye's surface.
- **Medications** – Many medicines increase the risk of dry eye symptoms, including antidepressants, antihistamines, blood pressure medications, and birth control pills.
- **Indoor environment** – Air conditioning and ceiling fans can decrease indoor humidity. This type of environment can accelerate tear evaporation, causing dry eye symptoms.
- **Health conditions** – Certain diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, thyroid-associated conditions, and lupus can contribute to dry eye problems.
- **Allergies** – Allergies can cause dry eyes; in conjunction with taking antihistamines to relieve allergies can also cause dry eyes. [Learn more](#)

## Sparklers Are Dangerous

Sparklers burn at about 2,000 degrees – hot enough to melt some metals. Sparklers can quickly ignite clothing, and children have received severe burns from dropping sparklers on their feet. According to the [National Fire Protection Association](#), sparklers alone account for more than 25% of emergency room visits for fireworks injuries. For children under 5 years of age, sparklers accounted for nearly half of the total estimated injuries.

Consider using safer alternatives, such as glow sticks, confetti poppers or colored streamers. [National Safety Council](#)



[ODP Summer Heat Safety Alert](#)



## For adults:

Get moving today



## Walk. Run. Dance. Play. What's your move?

Everyone needs physical activity to stay healthy. But it can be hard to find the time in your busy routine.

The Move Your Way® tools, videos, and fact sheets on this page have tips that make it easier to get a little more active. And small changes can add up to big health benefits!



**No matter who you are, you can find safe, fun ways to get active – to move your way.**

Physical activity can make your daily life better. [Read the fact sheet about physical activity for adults](#)

## How can we support you?

We know being a DSP goes beyond caregiving and focuses more broadly on supporting people with disabilities to participate fully in their communities, live in integrated settings and seek competitive integrated employment. And we all believe summertime is a wonderful time to be out and about.

Here at the [HCQU](#) we may have a lighter training calendar, but we are still busy providing education and technical assistance. Training helps staff feel more competent and confident in their roles, which leads to improved health of the individuals we support, increased job satisfaction and employee engagement.

[Contact the HCQU](#) for training support and don't forget our [free online training courses](#). These are available to anyone interested in expanding their knowledge of different healthcare issues.



## Health Care for Adults with IDD Toolkit Website for Primary Care Providers

This [IDD Toolkit website](#) provides information for the primary care of adults with IDD. The Toolkit offers health care providers best-practice tools and information regarding specific medical and mental and behavioral health concerns, including resources for patients and families. Here is a resource guide which may be helpful in determining possible physical health issues that might cause behavioral concerns for adults with IDD. [Cheetham's Checklist](#).

### Cheetham's Checklist

*Things to consider if a person is displaying new or concerning behaviors*

1. First, blame the drugs.
2. Is this person constipated?
3. Does he/she have gastroesophageal reflux (GERD)?
4. Could the behavior be a seizure?
5. Is he/she aspirating?
6. What's the etiology of the intellectual disability – does he/she have a syndrome?
7. Is his/her behavior different from usual?
8. How would we know if he/she is having pain?
9. How is he/she sleeping?
10. How's the person eating? / Does the person have dental problems?
11. Is there a psychiatric disorder present?

Created by Dr. Tom Cheetham, MD. Dr. Cheetham was part of the Developmental Disabilities Primary Care Initiative of Ontario, Canada, and he was instrumental in creation of the IDD Toolkit and related training efforts. He was a family physician and cared for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities for more than 30 years, in both institutions and community settings. He was the deputy commissioner of health services for the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities at the time of his death in August 2018.

**As many as 40% of individuals with IDD referred for an inpatient psychiatric stay have a missed or under-treated medical problem that was the actual reason for challenging behaviors that led to the admission.**

[Integrated Mental Health Treatment Guidelines for Prescribers in IDD](#)



# Hot German Potato Salad

By House of Nash Eats



There is nothing quite like a delicious bowl of authentic German Potato Salad to pair with a delicious summer barbecue. The combination of bacon, bacon drippings, onions, and vinegar provides tons of flavor, while the potatoes provide a creamy texture.

## Ingredients:

- 6 cups **peeled potatoes**, cut in half if large (about 2 to 2 ½ pounds -we prefer Yukon gold or red potatoes, but Russett potatoes will also work)
- 12 slices **bacon**
- 1 **medium onion**, chopped
- ½ cup **white vinegar** or **apple cider vinegar**
- ¼ cup **water**
- 4 Tablespoons **granulated sugar** to taste.
- 1 teaspoon **table salt**
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground **black pepper**
- 1 ½ teaspoons **celery seeds**
- 1 Tablespoon **dijon** or **spicy brown mustard** (optional)
- 2-3 Tablespoons chopped **fresh parsley**

[Print recipe including directions](#)



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# ODP Health Alert

## Lyme Disease and Other Tickborne Diseases in PA



The Office of Developmental Programs is sharing this [Health Alert](#) to make all individuals, providers, staff, and other caregivers aware of the latest Health Alert from the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH) for Lyme disease and other tickborne illnesses.

The DOH notes that:

- Tick bite-related emergency department visits have increased recently in Pennsylvania.
- Health care providers should have a heightened clinical suspicion for tickborne diseases in persons with clinically compatible symptoms.
- For questions, please call 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258) or your local health department for more information.



ODP Health Alert: [West Nile Virus and Other Mosquito-borne Diseases](#)

## Counties

Blair, Centre, Clinton,  
Columbia, Huntingdon,  
Juniata, Lycoming, Mifflin,  
Montour, Northumberland,  
Schuylkill, Snyder, Union

Are your new staff on the monthly newsletter distribution list? Email the [HCQU](#) to add names and email address.